

**DIVISION OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH
ISHRAT HUSAIN PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF LIVING AND LEARNING**

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PROF. NUSRAT HUSAIN'S MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the inaugural issue of the Child & Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) Division's Newsletter at the Pakistan Institute of Living & Learning (PILL). This publication reflects our collective commitment to ensuring that the mental health needs of children and adolescents are recognised, prioritised, and addressed with compassion and evidence-based care.

During my work in the United Kingdom, I have seen the far-reaching benefits of the "Every Child Matters" policy, which emphasises that every child has the right to be healthy, safe, and supported to achieve their fullest potential. The principles of this framework—placing children at the centre of all policy and service development—offer valuable lessons for Pakistan, where mental health services & research for the young remains largely underdeveloped yet urgently needed.

This newsletter will serve as a platform to exchange knowledge, highlight best practices, and adapt global lessons to our local context. By learning from policies like the "Every Child Matters" policy of UK & tailoring such policies to Pakistan's cultural and social realities, we can work towards a future where every child not only survives but thrives.

I am grateful to the CAMH Division team, PILL's Newsletter team & our collaborators for their dedication to this cause. Together, we can create an environment where no child is left behind, and every young person has the opportunity to grow into a healthy, resilient adult.



Chief Executive
Officer - PILL,
Professorial Research
Scientist -
Manchester Global
Foundation

PROF. NASIM CHAUDHRY'S MESSAGE

It is imperative to acknowledge both the urgency of addressing child and adolescent mental health needs in Pakistan, and the significant gaps that currently exist within available services. Through focused research, specialized training programs, and strategic collaborations, we are actively addressing existing gaps in knowledge and care. Our recent systematic review training initiatives are empowering professionals with the skills necessary to drive meaningful and sustainable improvements. Together, we are building the foundation for a healthier and more resilient future for our youth.



Professorial Scientist
& Head Of Division,
Child And
Adolescents Mental
Health

PROF. ZAINAB ZADEH'S MESSAGE

This quarter has been especially impactful for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) Division. From hands-on training in key assessment tools like K10 and SASII, to awareness campaigns and national surveys, our efforts are steadily gaining momentum. I am proud of our team's dedication and the growing network of professionals now better equipped to support the emotional and psychological well-being of children and adolescents across Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION



Childhood and adolescence are critical periods for mental health development, yet this area remains largely neglected in Pakistan. As a low-middle income country, Pakistan faces a significant shortage of mental health professionals, with child and adolescent psychiatric services making up only 0.01% of the already limited mental health resources. The scarcity of child psychologists and special education professionals further exacerbates the issue.

To address these gaps, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) Division at the Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning (PILL) focuses on research, intervention, and capacity building. Our diverse team is actively working to develop evidence-based interventions, conduct large-scale surveys, and provide specialised training for early-career researchers. Our key projects include the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Morbidity Survey and HOPE-PK, which looks at the biopsychosocial roots of depression in adolescents.

In addition to research, PILL has also developed and launched a 6-month certificate course on CAMH Services, strengthening professionals skills in this area. In addition, we run parenting programs and community awareness initiatives to support the emotional, cognitive, and social development of young people.

AIMS

Conducting research, synthesizing evidence, and raising awareness about child and adolescent mental health and well-being to fill research gaps with practical implications.

OBJECTIVES

- Generate research evidence in the field of child and adolescent mental health.
- Monitor and support the progress of ongoing research trials.
- Build capacity through training and development opportunities.
- Promote awareness of health and wellbeing of children and adolescents.



WORKSTREAMS

WS-1 Developing Evidence Base- Evidence synthesis, systematic reviews, epidemiological research, focus group, interviews, surveys, critical appraisals-

Lead: Usman Arshad

- Doing research to find burden of mental health problems in child and adolescents
- Developing and adapting culturally appropriate evidence based interventions

WS-3 Monitoring research conduct and progress - performance management, quality assurance, monitoring progress and timely conduct.

Lead: Rabia Fahad

- Monitoring child and adolescents mental health research studies progress within PILL
- Monitoring progress of papers and publications within organization

WS-2 Capacity building and awareness raising - Providing training and education, workshops, organizing webinars and conferences

Lead - Amna Naureen

Members: Zahra Nigah, Mansoor Ahmed

- Building capacity of researchers and academic scholars through training and education

WS-4 Dissemination - Publications, webpage, talks, newsletters, activity reports, community events

Lead: Maryam Riaz

Members: Hooria Huda, Atika Juma

- Working with local and international partners to strengthen collaboration and conducting awareness raising programs and activities in wider community.
- Dissemination of study findings



EVENTS

BUILDING POSITIVE OUTCOMES: PARENTING STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING AUTISM BEHAVIOUR

On January 25, 2025, the CAMH Division hosted an engaging webinar on autism and the role of parenting in behaviour management. The session featured expert speakers; Dr. Mansur Choudry (Autism Clinic, Oklahoma), Dr. Azra Rafiq (Preventive Pediatric Program), and Dr. Shahida Batool (Consultant Psychiatrist, Skardu).

They shared evidence-based techniques for managing autism-related behaviours, including early intervention models and culturally sensitive approaches. The event attracted parents, educators, and researchers, sparking thoughtful Q&A sessions and case study discussions. This webinar reflects PILL's ongoing mission to strengthen family support systems and translate research into accessible, everyday tools.

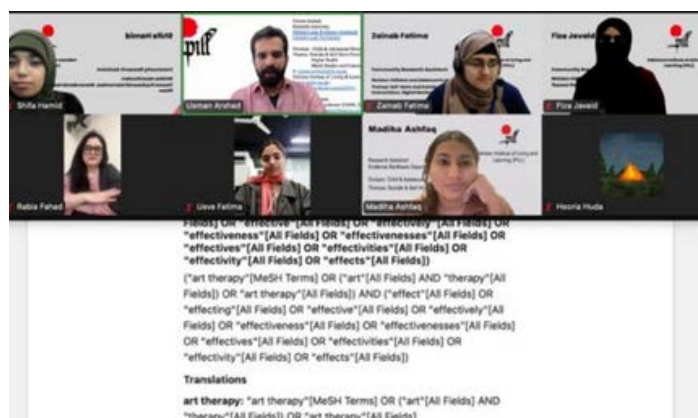
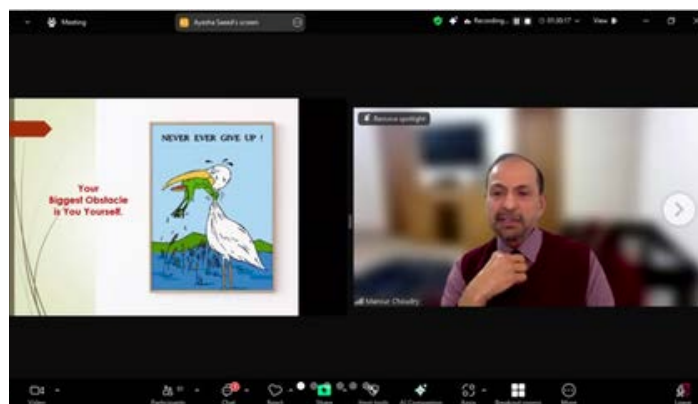
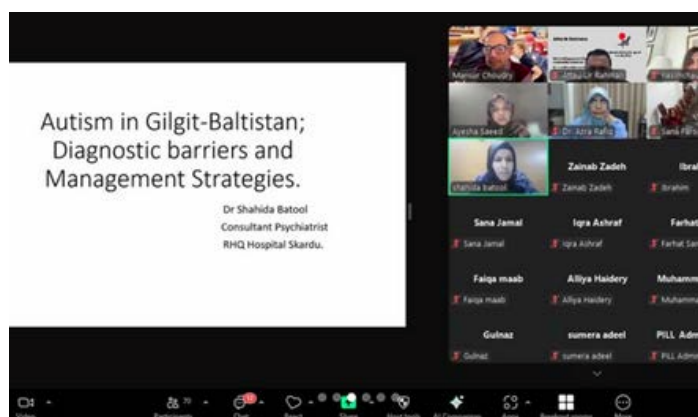
Looking ahead, the CAMH Division plans follow-up sessions on emotional regulation, social skills development, and multidisciplinary approaches, furthering PILL's mission to empower families and professionals in supporting children with autism. Upcoming sessions will explore autism spectrum disorders, offering tools and strategies for positive child development. By adopting a multidisciplinary approach, the CAMH Division aims to provide personalized support.

The focus is on fostering inclusive environments that celebrate neurodiversity, aiding children's social and emotional growth. Experts will share insights on helping children form connections and navigate social interactions.

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW TRAINING SESSION

On 29th January, 2025, the CAMH Division successfully conducted a Systematic Review Training Session. This session aimed to equip participants with essential skills in developing search strategies and screening academic literature using RAYYAN, a web-based tool designed to streamline the systematic reviews process.

Led by experts in the field, the training provided hands-on guidance in refining research questions, identifying relevant studies, and managing literature screening efficiently. Attendees, including early-career researchers and mental health professionals, gained valuable insights into enhancing the quality and rigor of systematic reviews in child and adolescent mental health research.



SEPAK ASSESSMENT TOOL TRAINING: MEASURING DISTRESS

On 12th March 2025, our division conducted a specialised training session on SEPAK Assessment Tools, led by Dr. Sehrish Irshad. The session centered on the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), a widely used screening tool that measures symptoms of anxiety and depression to assess psychological distress. Participants received training in administering the K10, strengthening their ability to identify individuals experiencing emotional distress.

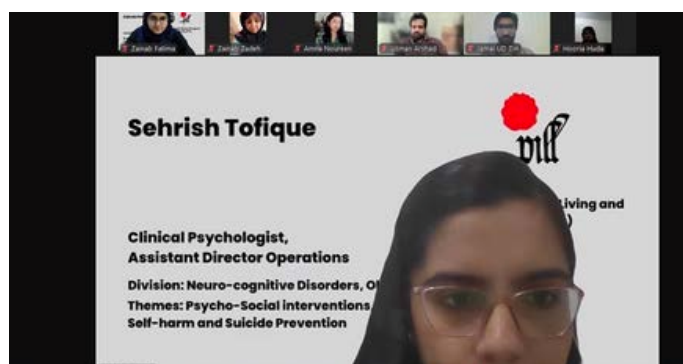
Twenty researchers from PILL attended the session, enhancing their understanding of the SEPAK project and refining their mental health assessment skills. This training aligns with PILL's commitment to advancing research and capacity building in child and adolescent mental health.



YCMAP ASSESSMENT TOOL TRAINING: UNDERSTANDING SELF-HARM

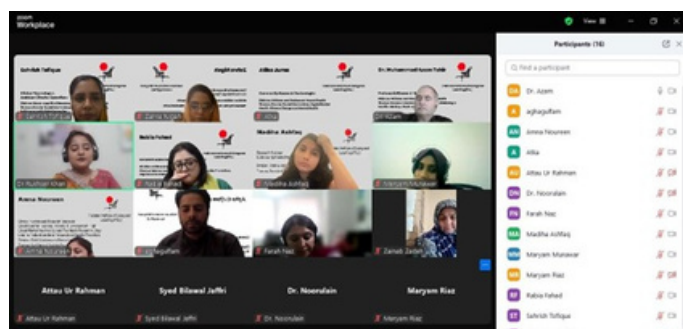
On 26th March 2025, our division conducted a training session on the YCMAP Assessment Tools, facilitated by Dr. Sehrish Tofique.

The session focused on the Suicide Attempt Self-Injury Interview (SASII), a validated tool used to assess the underlying factors of non-fatal suicide attempts and intentional self-injury. Participants received an interactive session administering the SASII Scale, enhancing their ability to identify individuals at risk of suicide and self-harm.



Y-CMAP MANUAL TRAINING

Y-CMAP Manual Training was organized on 21st May, 2025 as part of the capacity-building efforts for the Child and Adolescent Division members, including participants from the IAPT group. Ms. Sehrish Tofique provided an insightful overview of the first two sessions of the Y-CMAP manual, using practical examples to enhance understanding. Participants gained valuable knowledge on case formulation, crisis management planning, and the importance of psychoeducation in the therapeutic process.



BABY MATTERS CONFERENCE 2025 - WORKSHOP ON BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING, LAHORE.

On April 12, 2025, a key workshop titled "Exploring Brain Development and Learning: Prenatal to 5 Years" was held at Punjab University, Lahore, as part of Pakistan's first multi-disciplinary conference on infant and early childhood mental health.

The session was led by Dani Stamm Thomas, an expert from Oregon, USA, with a strong background in early childhood development and infant mental health.



BABY MATTERS CONFERENCE 2025 - WORKSHOP ON PLAY THERAPY, KARACHI.

On April 12, 2025, a workshop titled "Play for Wellness" was held at Iqra University, Karachi, as part of the Baby Matters Conference 2025 — Pakistan's first multi-disciplinary event focused on infant and early childhood mental health. The session was led by renowned play therapist Dr. Yolanda Fountain Hardy from the United States, a global expert in child and family therapy.

The workshop welcomed parents, educators, psychologists, and health professionals, offering valuable insights into how play supports emotional, mental, and behavioral wellness in children.

Participants learned about the importance of play in brain development, therapeutic play techniques, and how to use play therapy tools to support joyful and healthy growth in young children.



BABY MATTERS CONFERENCE 2025 - WORKSHOP ON EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH, PESHAWAR

On April 12, 2025, a special workshop on infant and early childhood mental health was held at Khyber Medical College, Peshawar, as part of Pakistan's first international conference on this topic. The session, titled "Nurturing Healthy Beginnings," focused on the mental health of young children and how health professionals can support it.

Experts from Pakistan and abroad, including Dr. Joanna Herrera and Dr. Angel Belle Dy, shared their knowledge about brain development and early care. The event was attended by doctors, psychologists, nurses, parents, and students.



This was a successful learning experience with practical insights for better care in the early years of life.



Each of these moments represents a meaningful step forward in improving mental health care and support for children and adolescents in both Pakistan and beyond.



Prof. Zainab Zadeh
Professorial Scientist & Head
of CAMH Division
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Rabia Fahad
Research Associate,
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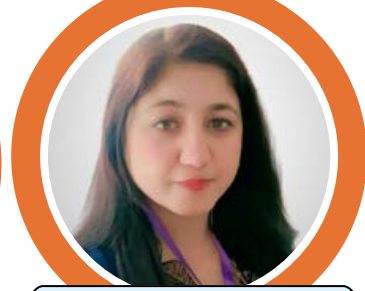
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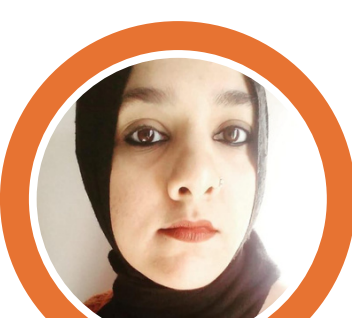
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